



plain and simple facts

DRUG INFORMATION



ddl (didanosine, Videx, Videx-EC)

Why am I given ddl as my medication?

- ddl (also called didanosine, Videx, Videx-EC) is a drug that is used in combination with other drugs to treat HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection.
- ddl blocks a protein called “reverse transcriptase.” As a result, it belongs to a class of drugs called reverse transcriptase inhibitors (RTIs). The HIV virus needs this protein to reproduce itself, so by blocking it the drug helps slow down HIV disease.
- Taking this medication can reduce the amount of virus in your body. It can also reduce your chance of getting sick from AIDS-related illnesses, help you stay healthy longer or get your health back. It may also reduce the damage to your immune system.

How do I take this medication?

- ddl comes in different strengths of chewable tablets (Videx) or capsules (Videx-EC). The dose of ddl depends on the weight of the individual.
- ddl must be taken on an empty stomach, 1 hour before or 2 hours after eating. Food will increase the acid in the stomach that destroys the drug.
- You can take ddl *tablets* in one of three different ways:
 - ~ Chew the tablets thoroughly, then swallow a small amount of water to wash it down. Do not swallow the tablets whole.
 - ~ Crush the tablets and mix them with at least 30 c.c. of water (2 tablespoons) to dissolve it, then drink.
 - ~ Dissolve the whole tablet in a glass of water and then drink the whole glass of liquid within an hour.
- ddl *capsules* can be swallowed whole without chewing or crushing.
- Do not mix ddl with citric fruit juices or pop, since these beverages are acidic and will destroy the drug. Use water or milk only.
- Brush your teeth immediately after each dose to prevent tooth decay.
- ddl should be kept at room temperature in a dry place. Avoid putting the medicine in the bathroom or kitchen, as moisture may cause the medicine to lose its potency.
- Keep it out of reach of children.

What if I forget to take a dose?

- Take the dose you missed as soon as possible. However, if it is within 2 hours of your next dose, just continue with your regular schedule. Do not double the dose.

Canadian AIDS Treatment
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- Recent studies have found that for the anti-HIV medications to work, all the medications need to be taken regularly and consistently. Missing or skipping doses of your medication may make it lose its effectiveness as the virus can change itself and become resistant to the medication.

What are the side effects of ddl?

- The most serious side effects of ddl are:
 - ~ burning, tingling or numbness in hands and feet (neuropathy)
 - ~ sharp abdominal pain that goes through to the back, with nausea and vomiting (swollen pancreas gland, or pancreatitis)
- Other common side effects of ddl can include:
 - ~ headache, dizziness, confusion
 - ~ diarrhea or constipation
 - ~ nausea and vomiting
 - ~ insomnia
 - ~ skin rash
 - ~ dry mouth, mouth sores or altered tastes
 - ~ joint pain
 - ~ abnormalities in the blood's uric acid level and liver functions
- Very rarely, ddl may cause a decrease in your white blood cells (which can increase risk for bacterial infection) and platelets (which can increase risk for bleeding).
- These side effects are reversible if recognized quickly and the drug is discontinued or reduced. If you feel these symptoms, talk to your doctor or pharmacist immediately. Do not stop the medication or change your dose before talking with them.

Can I take ddl with other medications?

- ddl can interact with other drugs. It is important to tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the prescription and non-prescription medications (including vitamins and herbs) that you are taking.
- You may need to adjust your dose of ddl if you are also taking tenofovir (Viread). Talk with your doctor if you are taking both drugs.
- Do not take ddl with ddC (Hivid).
- ddl should be taken at least 2 hours apart from ketoconazole (Nizoral), ciprofloxacin (Cipro) and tetracycline, and 1 hour apart from delavirdine (Rescriptol) and indinavir (Crixivan).
- Consult your doctor if you are also taking pentamidine or ganciclovir (Cytovene).

Can I take ddl with alcohol or street drugs?

- Avoid alcohol if you are on ddl. Alcohol may increase your risk for pancreatitis (swollen pancreas gland).
- ddl may also interact with street drugs. Consult your doctor or pharmacist if you are using street drugs so they can advise you with the necessary precautions.

Can I take ddl if I am pregnant or breast-feeding?

- If you are pregnant and wish to take ddl, please consult your doctor or pharmacist about taking medication.



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- Since the HIV virus can be transmitted through breast milk, breast-feeding is not recommended in HIV-positive women.

What other precautions do I need to know when taking ddl?

- If you have liver or kidney problems, make sure your doctor knows that before starting you on ddl.
- Keep your appointments with your physician to check your blood tests and monitor your liver and kidney function regularly.
- Make sure you have a continuous supply of the medication.
- ddl does not kill the virus or cure AIDS. It also does not prevent the transmission of HIV, so remember to always take precautions if you are having sex (use latex condoms) or using drugs (use clean syringes).

Decisions about particular medical treatments should always be made in consultation with a qualified medical practitioner knowledgeable about HIV-related illness and the treatments in question.



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This information is also available in French, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Swahili, and other languages at languages.catie.ca and www.acas.org

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